

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC COMMENT FOR A WATER
QUALITY STUDY (TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD DEVELOPMENT)**

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) seek written and oral comments from interested persons on a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development in the Onancock Creek watershed. The purpose of the study will be to identify sources of bacteria and low dissolved oxygen in the watershed and to determine the reductions in loadings needed to allow the stream to meet water quality goals.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act and §62.1-44.19:7.C of the Code of Virginia require DEQ to develop TMDLs for each pollutant causing a water quality problem, or impairment, in streams contained in Virginia's 303(d) Report on Impaired Waters.

In 1998, the Central Branch of Onancock Creek was identified in Virginia's 1998 303(d) TMDL Priority List and Report as impaired due to violations of Virginia's water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria. This stream is therefore not supporting the Primary Contact Recreation (swimmable) Designated Use. The impairment includes: 0.02 square miles of the Central Branch. Both the North Branch and the South Branch of the Onancock Creek were listed in Virginia's 2002 303(d) Report on Impaired Waters. The North Branch is impaired due to violations of Virginia's water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria and dissolved oxygen. This stream is not supporting the Primary Contact Recreation (swimmable) Designated Use and the Aquatic Life Use. The South Branch is impaired due to violations of Virginia's water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria. This stream is not supporting the Primary Contact Recreation (swimmable) Designated Use. The impaired areas include 0.03 square miles of the North Branch and 0.04 square miles of the South Branch.

A shellfish growing area in the Onancock Creek was also listed in the 1998 303(d) TMDL Priority List and Report as impaired for violations in the fecal coliform bacteria standard in shellfish waters.

The first public meeting has been scheduled for **Wednesday, March 2, 2005 at 7:00pm** at the Town of Onancock Council Chambers located at 15 North Street, Onancock Virginia. This meeting will run concurrently with the public meeting already scheduled for the shellfish growing area TMDL. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the TMDL development process and to share information on sources in the watershed. Anyone interested in attending this meeting should contact Jennifer Howell (contact information provided below). Information from this meeting will be made available on the DEQ TMDL web site at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl/>

Questions or information requests should be addressed to Jennifer Howell. The public comment period will end on **April 1, 2005**. Written comments regarding the water quality study and TMDL development should include the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the comments and should be sent to: Jennifer Howell, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Tidewater Regional Office, 5636 Southern Blvd, Virginia Beach, VA, 23462, telephone (757) 518-2111, fax (757) 518-2003, or e-mail jshowell@deq.virginia.gov.